



## Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

### Proposed Fishing Regulation Changes – 2017

Note: New language is in *italics*. Deleted language is indicated by **red** text and strikethrough.

#### WESTERN DISTRICT – Region 1

Adjust regulations for clarity and conservation purposes for Lake Creek (near Troy).

See p. 40, 2016 Fishing Regulation Booklet

**DELETE** existing language:

**~~LAKE CREEK (near Troy)~~**

~~150 yards downstream of Keeler Creek to mouth~~

~~Brown trout: no limit~~

~~Snagging: open for Salmon from September 15 through November 30.~~

~~Entire Stream~~

~~Open to fishing all year.~~

**Rearrange and ADD:**

**LAKE CREEK (near Troy)**

Open to fishing all year, *except 150 yards upstream of Keeler Creek to Chase Cutoff Bridge: Closed to angling from July 15 through October 31.*

Brown trout: no limit.

Snagging: *Downstream of Troy Dam* open for *Kokanee* Salmon from September 15 through November 30.

**RATIONALE:** The Current Wording is not clear concerning the intent of changes proposed and approved last year. Compounding the confusion is that errors occurred in collating the new regulation for the 2016 fishing season. Adjustments this year clarify that no limit for Brown Trout applies to all of Lake Creek. They also more explicitly protect an important stretch of stream where Bull Trout stage prior to moving into and out of the Keeler Creek spawning tributary. The proposal restricts snagging to downstream of the Troy dam to help avoid misunderstandings about where this activity is allowed, and to more clearly prohibit snagging in and around Keeler Creek during Bull Trout migration.

The unique downstream spawning run from Bull Lake through Lake Creek to Keeler Creek is threatened by illegal introductions of Brown Trout and Northern Pike in addition to intentional and unintentional angling during the spawning run. Adjusting and clarifying this regulation should help alleviate angling pressure targeting this area.



## Proposed Fishing Regulation Changes – 2017

Note: New language is in *italics*. Deleted language is indicated by **red** text and strikethrough.

### WESTERN DISTRICT – Region 1

Adjust regulations for clarity and conservation purposes for Middle Fork Flathead River.

See p. 42, 2016 Fishing Regulation Booklet

#### **MIDDLE FORK FLATHEAD RIVER DRAINAGE**

##### **~~All streams within the wilderness~~**

~~Combined trout: 3 daily and in possession, none over 12 inches in rivers and streams, no size limit in lakes. Includes Rainbow Trout, Cutthroat Trout and Arctic Grayling.~~

##### **Non-wilderness portion**

NOTE: Montana/Glacier National Park boundary is the ordinary high water mark on the park side of the river.

- Closed to angling June 1 through September 30 within a 150-yard radius of the Bear Creek stream mouth.
- Catch-and-release for Cutthroat Trout.
- Combined trout: 5 daily and in possession.
- Extended Whitefish season and catch-and release for trout open December 1 to third Saturday in May with artificial lures and/or maggots only.

**RATIONALE:** In 2015, the Western District Standard limit for Westslope Cutthroat Trout in rivers and streams was changed to 3 daily and in possession, none over 12 inches, the same regulation which formerly had been applied to Wilderness areas. This change was intended to create better uniformity and ease of understanding of regulations intended to conserve Westslope Cutthroat Trout across the Western District. Applying this regulation last year to the combined trout regulation for Rainbow Trout and Arctic Grayling in the Middle Fork Flathead River, however, resulted in a limit that is more restrictive than our management goals require for either species. To remedy this consequence, and to better clarify management intentions for the Middle Fork Flathead River, the proposal this year maintains the more conservative regulation for Westslope Cutthroat Trout, eliminates an exception for this species in the Wilderness that is no longer needed because it is contained in the Western District Standard for Westslope Cutthroat Trout, and changes the combined trout limit for Rainbow Trout and Arctic Grayling in the Wilderness to agree with the Western District Standard limit of 5 daily and in possession, only 1 over 14 inches. These changes are needed to help simplify and clarify the Middle Fork Flathead River Wilderness regulations by bringing them into conformity with current Western District Standard management regulations.



## Proposed Fishing Regulation Changes – 2017

Note: New language is in *italics*. Deleted language is indicated by **red** text and strikethrough.

### WESTERN DISTRICT – Region 1

Adjust regulations for clarity and conservation purposes for South Fork Flathead River.

See p. 45, 2016 Fishing Regulation Booklet

#### **SOUTH FORK FLATHEAD RIVER ~~DRAINAGE~~**

~~All waters upstream from Hungry Horse Dam, including Hungry Horse Reservoir and tributaries except Meadow Creek section (see below)~~

~~Combined trout: 3 daily and in possession, none over 12 inches in rivers and streams, no size limit in lakes. Includes Rainbow Trout, Cutthroat Trout and Arctic Grayling.~~

**Mainstem upstream from Hungry Horse Reservoir (from Crossover Boat Ramp south and upstream to the confluence of Youngs and Danaher creeks)**

- Bull Trout: catch-and-release from the third Saturday in May through July 31. A Hungry Horse/South Fork Flathead Bull Trout Catch Card must be in possession when fishing for Bull Trout. See Special License requirements for application information. All Bull Trout must be released immediately. It is unlawful to possess a live Bull Trout for any reason.

**Meadow Creek Bridge to Spotted Bear foot bridge and tributaries**

- Catch-and-release ~~only~~ *for cutthroat trout*.
- Artificial lures only.

**Hungry Horse Dam downstream to Devil's Elbow and tributaries**

- Closed entire year.

**Devil's Elbow downstream to mouth and tributaries**

- Catch-and-release for Cutthroat Trout.
- Extended season for Whitefish and catch-and-release for trout open December 1 to third Saturday in May with artificial lures and/or maggots only.

**RATIONALE:** In 2015, the Western District Standard limit for Westslope Cutthroat Trout in rivers and streams was changed to 3 daily and in possession, none over 12 inches, the same regulation which formerly had been applied to Wilderness areas. This change was intended to create better uniformity and ease of understanding of regulations intended to conserve Westslope Cutthroat Trout across the Western District. Applying this regulation last year to the combined trout regulation for Rainbow Trout and Arctic Grayling in the South Fork Flathead River, however, resulted in a limit that is more restrictive than our management goals require for either species. To remedy this consequence, and to better clarify management intentions for the South Fork Flathead River, the proposal this year maintains the more conservative regulation for Westslope Cutthroat Trout, and changes the combined trout limit for Rainbow Trout and Arctic Grayling in the Wilderness to agree with the Western District Standard limit of 5 daily and in possession, only 1 over 14 inches.

The text added to the catch and release regulation clarifies that this regulation is specific to Cutthroat Trout and not to non-native species. The added text also helps make clear that Bull Trout catch card and associated regulations for this species are consistent throughout the river.

For the Meadow Creek Bridge to Spotted Bear foot bridge and tributaries section, we propose to add the text “for Cutthroat Trout” to clarify that the catch and release regulation is specific to Cutthroat Trout and not to other species. This regulation was never intended to provide protection and restrict harvest for Rainbow Trout, Mountain Whitefish and Arctic Grayling. Similarly, a Bull Trout catch card requirement, a special fishing season, and associated restrictions, have always been applied to Bull Trout in this reach. Adding text specifying that catch and release applies only to Cutthroat Trout helps support the Bull Trout regulations as well, by ensuring they are consistent throughout the river.



## Proposed Fishing Regulation Changes – 2017

**Note:** *New language is in **italics**.* Deleted language is indicated by **red** text and strikethrough.

### **WESTERN DISTRICT – Region 2**

Reduce trout harvest limit, no limit for other species, Silver's Lagoon aka McCormick Pond (Missoula).

See p. 42, 2016 Fishing Regulation Booklet

**McCORMICK POND aka SILVER'S LAGOON (Missoula).**

~~Open April 1 through October 30.~~

~~3 fish daily and in possession, any species~~

~~Open to fishing for anglers 14 years of age or younger.~~

Regulations are re-ordered to match the complimentary entry for SILVER'S LAGOON aka MCCORMICK POND, trout limit is reduced, no limit for other species:

**McCORMICK POND aka SILVER'S LAGOON (Missoula).**

Open to fishing for anglers 14 years of age or younger.

Open April 1 through October 30.

~~3 fish daily and in possession, any species.~~ *Combined trout, including cutthroat trout: 1 fish daily and in possession.*

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Trout limit reduced, no limit for other species:

**SILVER'S LAGOON aka McCORMICK POND (Missoula).**

Open to fishing for anglers 14 years of age or younger.

Open April 1 through October 30.

~~3 fish daily and in possession, any species.~~ *Combined trout, including cutthroat trout: 1 fish daily and in possession.*

**RATIONALE:** Reducing the harvest limit from 3 fish to 1 fish and specifying trout conserves the abundance of stocked fish over time, which allows more youth anglers the opportunity to keep a trout. Specifying trout also eliminates current restrictions on the harvest of non-trout species that should be removed from the pond (e.g., northern pike). As an additional benefit, the City of Missoula Recreation Department requested this regulation change during scoping in 2015. They organize events at the pond and regularly monitor its use. This regulation change helps to maximize the opportunity for young anglers to catch a trout from a heavily used and relatively small-sized body of water.

# Proposed Fishing



**Montana Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks**

## Regulation Changes – 2017

Note: New language is in *italics*. Deleted language is indicated by **red** text and strikethrough.

### **CENTRAL DISTRICT – Region 4**

Eliminate Priest Butte Lake fishing season exception.

See p. 73, 2016 Fishing Regulation Booklet

**~~PRIEST BUTTE LAKE~~**

~~Open June 15 through September 15.~~

~~Open December 1 through the end of February.~~

**RATIONALE:** The seasonal closure at Priest Butte Lake no longer has fisheries management relevancy. Eliminating the exception removes an un-needed restriction on angling opportunity



## Proposed Fishing Regulation Changes – 2017

Note: New language is in *italics*. Deleted language is indicated by **red** text and strikethrough.

### CENTRAL DISTRICT – Region 3

Modify Big Hole River fishing regulations for clarity and to enhance Arctic Grayling conservation.

See P. 60, 2016 Fishing Regulation Booklet

#### **Big Hole River**

##### **Fishing Regulations**

#### **Delete 2016 Version:**

##### ~~Entire River~~

- ~~• Catch and release for Arctic Grayling.~~
- ~~• Extended season for Whitefish and catch and release for trout open December 1 to the third Saturday in May with artificial lures and/or maggots.~~

##### ~~Headwaters to North Fork Big Hole River~~

- ~~• Brook Trout open entire year.~~

##### ~~Headwaters to Dickie Bridge~~

- ~~• Combined Trout: 5 daily and in possession, no size restriction.~~

##### ~~Dickie Bridge to Melrose Bridges~~

- ~~• Artificial lures only.~~

#### **Proposed 2017 Version:**

##### *Headwaters to Dickie Bridge*

- \*Open all year*
- \*Catch and release for Arctic Grayling*
- \*Combined Trout: 5 daily and in possession, no size restriction.*
- \*Brook Trout: 20 daily and in possession*

##### *Dickie Bridge to Melrose Bridges*

- \*Catch and release for Arctic Grayling*
- \*Artificial lures only.*
- \* Catch and release only for trout December 1 to third Saturday in May with artificial lures and/or maggots*

##### *Melrose Bridges to the mouth*

- \*Catch and release for Arctic Grayling*
- \* Catch and release only for trout December 1 to third Saturday in May with artificial lures and/or maggots.*

**RATIONALE:** This proposal is intended to clarify fishing regulations for each segment of the river.

Historically, non-native trout harvest regulations on the Upper Big Hole River were meant to provide harvest opportunity to benefit Arctic grayling, but the wording of regulations has caused confusion among anglers, especially concerning what is permitted in winter months. In addition to making regulations easier to understand in each river section, the recommended change provides better agreement between non-native trout harvest regulations in the Upper Big Hole River and the geographic boundaries of the Arctic Grayling conservation area. This change should help reinforce the rationale that management objectives in establishing non-native trout harvest regulations in the Upper Big Hole River include support for Arctic Grayling conservation.





**Montana Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks**

## Proposed Fishing Regulation Changes – 2017

Note: *New language is in **italics**.* Deleted language is indicated by **red** text and strikethrough.

### **CENTRAL DISTRICT – Region 3**

Reduce Cutthroat Trout limit for Red Rock Creek (Beaverhead River drainage).

See p. 73, 2016 Fishing Regulation Booklet

#### **Red Rock Creek (Beaverhead River drainage)**

- \*Open entire year except May 15 through June 14.
- \*~~Cutthroat Trout: 20 daily and in possession.~~
- \* *Cutthroat Trout: 5 daily and in possession, no size limit.*

**RATIONALE:** For the past four years, FWP and the USFWS National Refuge have been suppressing hybridized Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout (YCT) in Red Rock Creek to determine if YCT abundance was harming Arctic Grayling. Historically the harvest regulation had been liberalized to 20 fish daily and in possession, to help reduce the population of YCT in the Red Rock Lakes system. After four years of suppression, it doesn't appear that YCT have a large influence on Arctic Grayling abundance. The proposed reduction in YCT harvest limit this year, to 5 fish daily and in possession, re-establishes a more conservative harvest limit for YCT as suppression of YCT is discontinued and as the next phase of investigations to understand limiting factors for Arctic Grayling are initiated.



## Proposed Fishing Regulation Changes – 2017

Note: New language is in *italics*. Deleted language is indicated by **red** text and strikethrough.

### CENTRAL DISTRICT – Region 3

Reinstate seasonal spawning protections for Rainbow Trout in Duck Creek.

New regulation exception

#### **Duck Creek**

*\* Open third Saturday in May through November 30.*

**RATIONALE:** In 2016, opening most rivers and streams to year-round angling in the Central Fishing District expanded many fishing opportunities. This change was made with the understanding that evaluations of the new regulation might require reinstating seasonal fishing restrictions on a case by case basis, if information suggested this action would be prudent to conserve particular fisheries. FWP investigations of Hebgen Reservoir, including microchemistry evaluations, studies using tetracycline marking, and fin erosion examinations, now confirm that wild reproduction of Rainbow Trout contributes most (over 80%) of the Rainbow Trout in Hebgen Reservoir. We also know that several Hebgen Lake tributaries are especially important to wild fish recruitment to the reservoir. Duck Creek is one of these tributaries. On the basis of all this information, establishing seasonal protections for spawning Rainbow Trout for this tributary seems prudent at this time.



## Proposed Fishing Regulation Changes – 2017

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### **CENTRAL DISTRICT – Region 3**

Reinstate seasonal spawning protections for Grayling Creek.

New regulation exception

#### ***Grayling Creek***

*\* Open third Saturday in May through November 30.*

**RATIONALE:** In 2016, opening most rivers and streams to year-round angling in the Central Fishing District expanded many fishing opportunities. This change was made with the understanding that evaluations of the new regulation might require reinstating seasonal fishing restrictions on a case by case basis, if information suggested this action would be prudent to conserve particular fisheries. FWP investigations of Hebgen Reservoir, including microchemistry evaluations, studies using tetracycline marking, and fin erosion examinations, now confirm that wild reproduction of Rainbow Trout contributes most (over 80%) of the Rainbow Trout in Hebgen Reservoir. We also know that several Hebgen Lake tributaries are especially important to wild fish recruitment to the reservoir. Grayling Creek is one of these tributaries. On the basis of all this information, establishing seasonal protections for spawning Rainbow Trout for this tributary seems prudent at this time.



## Proposed Fishing Regulation Changes – 2017

Note: New language is in *italics*. Deleted language is indicated by **red** text and strikethrough.

### CENTRAL DISTRICT – Region 3

Reinstate seasonal spawning protections for the South Fork Madison River.

New regulation exception

#### **South Fork Madison River**

*\* Open third Saturday in May through November 30..*

**RATIONALE:** In 2016, opening most rivers and streams to year-round angling in the Central Fishing District expanded many fishing opportunities. This change was made with the understanding that evaluations of the new regulation might require reinstating seasonal fishing restrictions on a case by case basis, if information suggested this action would be prudent to conserve particular fisheries. FWP investigations of Hebgen Reservoir, including microchemistry evaluations, studies using tetracycline marking, and fin erosion examinations, now confirm that wild reproduction of Rainbow Trout contributes most (over 80%) of the Rainbow Trout in Hebgen Reservoir. We also know that several Hebgen Lake tributaries are especially important to wild fish recruitment to the reservoir. The South Fork Madison River is one of these tributaries. On the basis of all this information, establishing seasonal protections for spawning Rainbow Trout for this tributary seems prudent at this time.



## Proposed Fishing Regulation Changes – 2017

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### **CENTRAL DISTRICT – Region 3**

Modify Hellroaring Creek fishing regulations for clarity and to conform to previous changes in the Central Fishing District.

See page 66, 2016 Fishing Regulation Booklet

#### **HELLROARING CREEK (Yellowstone River drainage)**

- Cutthroat Trout: 3 daily and in possession, ~~none over 12~~ *only one over 14* inches.

**RATIONALE:** This change is recommended to help bring the Hellroaring Creek trout regulation exception into conformity with other exceptions in the Central District. This change helps clarify the intention to standardize Central Fishing District trout regulations exceptions whenever possible and appropriate.



## Proposed Fishing Regulation Changes – 2017

Note: New language is in *italics*. Deleted language is indicated by **red** text and strikethrough.

### CENTRAL DISTRICT – Region 5

Modify Slough Creek fishing regulations for clarity and to conform to previous changes in the Central Fishing District.

See page 74, 2016 Fishing Regulation Booklet

#### **SLOUGH CREEK (Yellowstone River drainage)**

- Cutthroat Trout: 3 daily and in possession, ~~none over 12~~ *only one over 14* inches.

**RATIONALE:** This change is recommended to help bring the Slough Creek trout regulation exception into conformity with other exceptions in the Central District. This change helps clarify the intention to standardize Central Fishing District trout regulations exceptions whenever possible and appropriate.



## Proposed Fishing Regulation Changes – 2017

Note: New language is in *italics*. Deleted language is indicated by **red** text and strikethrough.

### CENTRAL DISTRICT – Region 5

Modify Slough Creek fishing regulations for clarity and to conform to previous changes in the Central Fishing District.

See page 74, 2016 Fishing Regulation Booklet

#### **SODA BUTTE CREEK (Yellowstone River drainage)**

- Cutthroat Trout: 3 daily and in possession, ~~none over 12~~ *only one over 14* inches.

**RATIONALE:** This change is recommended to help bring the Soda Butte Creek trout regulation exception into conformity with other exceptions in the Central District. This change helps clarify the intention to standardize Central Fishing District trout regulations exceptions whenever possible and appropriate.



## Proposed Fishing Regulation Changes – 2017

Note: New language is in *italics*. Deleted language is indicated by red text and strikethrough.

### CENTRAL DISTRICT – Region 3 and 5

Modify Yellowstone River Tributaries to eliminate the Buffalo Fork Cutthroat Trout exception, and to adjust the Hellroaring Creek, Slough Creek, and Soda Butte Creek trout regulations to conform to previous changes in the Central Fishing District.

See page 76, 2016 Fishing Regulation Booklet

#### YELLOWSTONE RIVER TRIBUTARIES

~~Buffalo Fork~~, Hellroaring, Slough and Soda Butte creeks upstream from YNP boundary

- Cutthroat Trout: 3 daily and in possession, ~~none over 12~~ *only one over 14* inches.

All tributaries between YNP Boundary and Pine Creek Bridge

- Catch-and-release for Cutthroat Trout.

All tributaries downstream from Springdale

- Combined trout: All may be Cutthroat Trout (unless indicated otherwise in tributary exceptions).

**RATIONALE:** This change is recommended to help bring the Hellroaring Creek, Slough Creek, and Soda Butte Creek trout regulation exceptions into conformity with other exceptions in the Central District. This change helps clarify the intention to standardize Central Fishing District trout regulations exceptions whenever possible and appropriate. The Buffalo Creek Cutthroat Trout regulation exception is eliminated because it is not relevant; the stream supports a Rainbow Trout fishery.





## Proposed Fishing Regulation Changes – 2017

Note: New language is in *italics*. Deleted language is indicated by **red** text and strikethrough.

### EASTERN DISTRICT – Region 7

Modify Yellowstone River Paddlefish Regulation at Intake Diversion Dam to clarify that Paddlefish season may end before June 30, and that fishing from a boat/vessel is allowed again after the Paddlefish season closes.

See pages 87 and 93, 2016 Fishing Regulation Booklet

P.87

**Intake Diversion Dam to about 1/4 mile downstream as posted (Yellow Tag)**

- ~~Closed May 15 through June 30 to fishing or snagging from boats/vessels.~~
- *Closed to fishing, snagging, or landing Paddlefish from boats/vessels during the open Paddlefish Season (May 15 through June 30, or earlier as posted on site).*

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**Intake Diversion Dam to about 1/4 mile downstream as posted**

- ~~Closed May 15 through June 30 to fishing or snagging from boats/vessels.~~
- *Closed to fishing, snagging, or landing Paddlefish from boats/vessels during the open Paddlefish Season (May 15 through June 30, or earlier as posted on site).*
- Snagging: It is illegal to snag for fish other than Paddlefish.

**RATIONALE:** The Paddlefish season on the Yellowstone River often closes before June 30 as harvest quotas are reached earlier than that date in most years. This regulation change is intended to more clearly express the prohibition of fishing from boats during the open Paddlefish season, that the Paddlefish season may close before June 30 (in which case the closure will be posted), and that fishing from boats is again allowed at the Intake Diversion Access Site after the Paddlefish season ends.